People filling an opiate prescription at a Kroger pharmacy will receive a free drug disposal bag for unused medication courtesy of Montgomery County Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services (ADAMHS). The drug disposal bags are part of an ongoing effort to provide a safe, cost-effective and environmentally responsible solution to eliminate unwanted opiate prescription drugs.

“By using these charcoal deactivation disposal bags we can discourage misuse and abuse of unwanted opiate medications,” said ADAMHS Executive Director Helen Jones-Kelley. “The bags are convenient and easy-to-use with a simple three step process. Once the charcoal inside the bag absorbs a drug, it becomes insoluble and can safely be disposed,” she added.

ADAMHS received a $50,000 state grant to collaborate with Goodwill/Easter Seals Miami Valley (GWESMV) to purchase and distribute 5,000 drug disposal bags as part of a national Generation Rx education program to enhance medication safety.

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“As a treatment provider serving people struggling with opiate addiction, we are excited to now have this opportunity to work with community partners to prevent others from becoming addicted,” said Dawn Cooksey, GWESMV Director of Behavioral Health Services.

The second leading cause of medications in the water supply is due to people flushing them in the toilet or improperly discarding the drugs.

“Medication safety is a top priority at Kroger Pharmacy. We are proud to partner with ADAMHS and Goodwill Easter Seals Miami Valley to encourage the safe disposal of old or unused medications. Kroger Pharmacy has 13 locations in Montgomery County that will distribute disposal pouches,” said Margaret McClure, vice president of Merchandising, Kroger Cincinnati/Dayton division.
For any addict, the road to recovery can be difficult. For Norm Zent, it was nearly 20 years in the making.

Fortunately, thanks to efforts by local organizations like the Montgomery County Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS), Zent found the support and programs he needed to overcome his drug addiction.

Growing up, Zent never imagined he could become a drug addict. His life was good. His family supported him and he did well in school. He enjoyed social drinking as a teenager, but he believes it was more than alcohol that led to his battle with substance use.

“I had an injury in high school playing football and ended up on a lot of pain medicine,” Zent says. The experience with pain medicine led him to use prescription medicines like benzodiazepines, cocaine and heroin.

“I honestly knew I was addicted at some level by the time I was 17 or 18, but I believed I could handle it,” Zent says. For the next 20 years, he struggled with substance use addiction, leading to stints in and out of rehab and run-ins with the law.

By 2014, Zent was ready to make a change.

“I was still on drugs, but I knew I didn’t want to be anymore,” Zent says. “I was hopeless and helpless out on the streets. I needed to stop.”

With the help of connections in the community and local resources, including Alcohol Anonymous, the Joshua Recovery Ministries and other ADAMHS-supported programs, Zent made the commitment to beat addiction.

“Anyone suffering from addiction is much more likely to find lasting, significant recovery if they have access to the right programs and support systems,” says Ann Stevens, spokesperson for ADAMHS. “ADAMHS has invested millions of dollars into our community to help provide these critical services.”

Relying on his faith, determination and community programs, Zent finally was able to overcome the addiction that had tormented him for almost two decades.

Clean and sober since May 8, 2014, Zent is proud of the life he has forged in Dayton. He continues to be active in the recovery community, working as a caseworker at Joshua Recovery Ministries. “Recovery is a gift. It can be accepted or rejected. I look back at all the times I rejected it, but it’s that simple,” Zent says.

“People need to know there are people that care and can help right now,” Stevens says. “The resources are in place for anyone in Montgomery County to get the help they need.”

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ADAMHS delivers valuable community resources to those suffering from drug addiction and supports programs that are making a difference in the fight against addiction, including peer coaching, recovery housing, employment services, spiritual support and naloxone training.

If you or a loved one is suffering from addiction, call Samaritan CrisisCare at (937) 224-4646 or visit www.thinkagainmc.org.

Dayton Man Recovers From A Nearly 20-year Drug Addiction